



EAZA response to reports on elephant management techniques at Hannover Zoo

Amsterdam, 5 April, 2017: The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) has been made aware of a report on elephant training techniques at Hannover Zoo. The film shows staff at the zoo using an elephant training tool known as ankus, and appears to show excessive physical discipline of the animals.

EAZA recognizes two forms of elephant management: protected contact management, and free contact management. Protected contact management involves the construction of specialised facilities where the elephant and keeper never share the same unrestricted space and all contact is undertaken through a protective barrier.

Free contact places animals and keepers in the same space and requires direct physical contact between them. EAZA's Elephant Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) recognises that there are benefits to each of these systems, and as a result accepts the necessity of correct use of the ankus in free contact situations.

EAZA does not condone incorrect or excessive use of the ankus. The terms of correct practice of free contact are set out in EAZA guidelines, a comprehensive guide to the optimal care of elephants of both species.

EAZA Members are bound by the Association's Guidelines on the use of animals in demonstrations (2014), which set out clearly the role animals can play in educational activities, and show clear limits within which demonstrations should remain to maintain the welfare and dignity of the animals.

EAZA's first responsibility lies with the welfare of the animals at Hannover Zoo, and we have sought an explanation of the film's contents from the institution and reassurances that the animals are being cared for in accordance with the husbandry guidelines and our Standards for the Accommodation and Care of Animals at Zoos and Aquariums (2015). These reassurances, if and when forthcoming, will be examined in detail by the Elephant TAG.

EAZA is in contact with Hannover Zoo and will review all the evidence as part of our commitment to transparent and solution-oriented process in the handling of the case.

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EAZA

Representing 321 zoos and aquariums across 44 countries in Europe and the Middle East, EAZA is the world's largest zoo Membership organisation. Founded in 1992 on the premise that progressive zoos working together could improve the impact of conservation, husbandry, welfare, research, and education work done by zoos, the Association requires the highest standards of its Members in each of these areas, and is active in assisting zoos in developing countries to meet the same high standards. EAZA is responsible for the administration of 400 breeding programmes, including the European Endangered Species Programmes (EEP).

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